

BUILDING INSPECTIONS

DESCRIPTION

Building Inspections' primary function is to enforce provisions of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (VaUSBC), which regulates new building construction as mandated by the State of Virginia. In compliance with the code, the department accepts permit applications, reviews those applications for compliance with the VaUSBC, and issues permits for the proposed work. The department also reviews proposed plans and the actual construction for compliance with federal and state construction mandates. Plans are also distributed to other county departments for review, if required.

Inspectors perform site visits to inspect construction projects at various stages of completion. Field

verification is needed to ensure that construction proceeds in compliance with approved plans and applicable practices, and to ensure that work by all trades (structural, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, gas, and fire prevention) is installed in compliance with the applicable code requirements. After successful completion of construction, the department issues a certificate of occupancy before the building can be used.

The department is also responsible for enforcement of Part III of the VaUSBC, which pertains to maintenance of existing structures to protect public health, welfare, and safety. The recently approved blight ordinance provides a mechanism for the department to impact blight within the county.

FINANCIAL ACTIVITY

	FY2002 Actual	FY2003 Adopted	FY2004 Biennial Planned	FY2004 Adopted	Change FY2003 to FY2004	FY2005 Projected	FY2006 Projected	FY2007 Projected
Personnel	\$3,047,162	\$3,164,500	\$3,164,500	\$3,203,400	1.2%	\$3,203,400	\$3,203,400	\$3,203,400
Operating	455,104	472,500	472,500	524,200	10.9%	524,200	524,200	524,200
Capital	<u>7,409</u>	<u>223,700</u>	<u>223,700</u>	<u>224,500</u>	0.4%	<u>224,500</u>	<u>224,500</u>	<u>224,500</u>
Total	\$3,509,674	\$3,860,700	\$3,860,700	\$3,952,100	2.4%	\$3,952,100	\$3,952,100	\$3,952,100
Revenue	<u>4,174,259</u>	<u>3,710,000</u>	<u>3,782,800</u>	<u>3,710,000</u>	0.0%	<u>3,710,000</u>	<u>3,710,000</u>	<u>3,710,000</u>
Net Cost	(\$664,585)	\$150,700	\$77,900	\$242,100	60.7%	\$242,100	\$242,100	\$242,100
FT Pos.	63	63	63	64	1	64	64	64

Note: One position was transferred from the "Unassigned" responsibility center during FY2003 for a new Building Inspector

* Includes \$205,000 reserve for technology improvements not reflected in sectional summary.

** Building Inspections revenues can be used to fund the Fire and EMS Department's plans review section. The net cost of the plans review section was \$540,000 in FY2002.

BUDGET ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The Building Inspections Department is subject to cyclical and erratic shifts in the construction industry that dramatically impact revenues and workload from year to year. Building permit activity did not meet expectations in FY2001. In recognition of this reduction in activity, the department reduced

expenditures to compensate for revenues below original estimates.

The 2002 budget for building permit revenue assumed that building activity for that period would decrease due to deteriorating economic conditions.

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Circumstances subsequent to that estimate proved just the opposite; low mortgage rates and land available for construction led to significant increases in building permit activity. The FY2003 budget for Building Inspections reflected the continuation of increased activity, ultimately resulting in the addition of one inspector position during the year to respond to increased workload.

Capital included in the FY2004 budget (and in future years) is almost entirely for hardware and software purchases related to the new Chesterfield Development Information System (CDIS). CDIS is a central relational database that will link all community development related functions together through the use of one software system. The implementation of CDIS will allow inspectors to have complete information in the field and eliminate the

need for administrative staff to key information into a separate system. CDIS will also result in more efficient customer service, expanded reporting ability, and business transactions over the Internet.

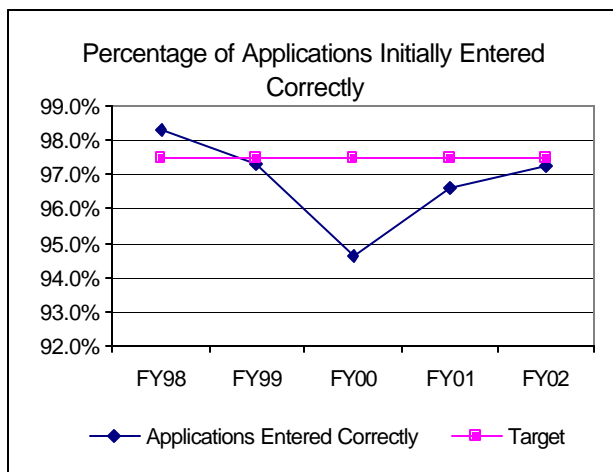
Building Inspections continues implementation of several other new initiatives. The department has been charged with enforcement of the county's new blight ordinance. Combined divisional inspection teams utilize cross-trained inspectors to provide greater customer service and reduce travel distance. Imaging provides an opportunity for the department to increase efficiency through electronic scanning and storage of documents. The Building Inspections Department received an 86.1% satisfaction rate on a customer satisfaction survey conducted in August 2001.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Goal: To provide the highest quality customer service. Supports countywide strategic goal number 2

Objective: Improve accuracy and timeliness of permit application processing.

Measure: Percentage of applications initially entered correctly

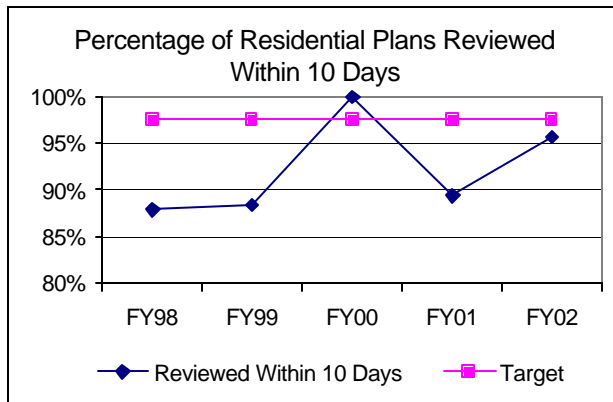


Initiatives

- Quality assurance reviews and supplemental training
- Administrative cross-training program
- Job share program
- Chesterfield Development Information System (currently in development)

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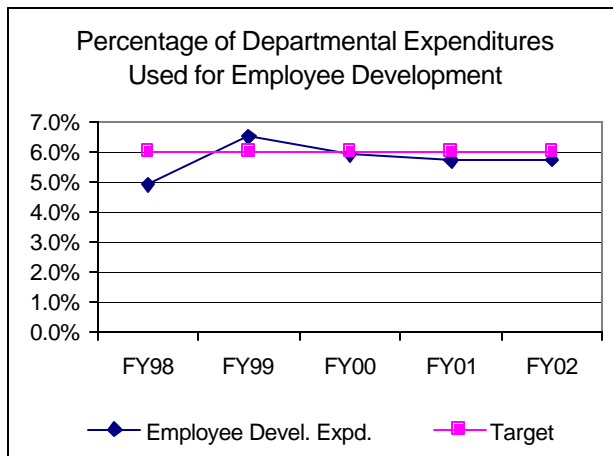
- Goal:** To foster a positive relationship between the department and the business community. Supports countywide strategic goal number 7
- Objective:** Provide timely review of residential building permit applications
- Measure:** Percentage of residential plans reviewed within 10 days (initial plan review turnaround time for residential structural plans reviewed by Building Inspection only)



Initiatives

- Chesterfield Development Information System (currently in development)
- Front counter customer assistance with residential plan reviews
- Master Plan Program
- Maintain staffing

- Goal:** To be the employer of choice. Supports countywide strategic goal number 6
- Objective:** Maintain a commitment to employee training, education, development, rewards, and recognition
- Measure:** Expenditures for employee development as a percentage of personnel costs



Initiatives

- Rewards and recognition programs
- Local and national conference attendance
- Cross-training
- School of Quality and Continuous Improvement (TQI University)
- Customer service, technical, and computer training

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

With the installation of CDIS, Building Inspections will concentrate on eliminating rework caused by the current mainframe system. The central relational

database will help Building Inspections expand customer service and improve its reporting ability for better statistical data collection.

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As part of the CDIS capital project, the department plans to purchase laptop computer field units. These units will allow inspectors to have complete information about a project while in the field. Units can download and upload field information, reducing the requirement for manual entry of field comments by support staff. CDIS improvements are planned to include imaging of associated paperwork, applications, residential plat plans and smaller plans.

Commercial plan review comments have been available over the Internet for the past 2 years. A program will soon be introduced to include residential plans review information. In the future the department hopes to expand this program to include accepting applications and payments via the Internet.

Imaging may be the next opportunity to improve customer service by reducing wait time, ensuring correct information is available to all reviewers and customers, and restructuring services for greater cost efficiency. Imaging eliminates the need for multiple paper copies of plans and other documents related to

a permit by creating an easily stored permanent copy of pertinent information.

The department is also looking toward a major relocation with the construction and completion of the community development building. The new building will house several community development departments together in the same location. This will be much more efficient as Building Inspections' staff interacts with many other community development departments on a daily basis. One of the features of the new building will be a customer service center for all community development departments. The new building is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2005.

As part of the department's emphasis on constant improvement in customer service, recent upgrades to technological hardware will allow the Building Inspection department to expand the use of technological tools previously unavailable. The new building will also offer opportunities to improve customer service through cooperative inter-departmental working arrangements.